ATTENTION ALBERTA WRITERS

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When the Alberta Folklore and Local History Project was established at the University of Alberta in 1943, it was the strong belief of the persons responsible that one purpose of the Project should be the encouragement of a regional literature. With this purpose in mind the Alberta Writers' Conference was established and held its first meeting in the summer of 1944 as part of the Banff School of Fine Arts.

The Conference had the general aims of aiding in the collection of such native Alberta material as might be useful to creative writers, and the encouragement of writers in the use of Alberta themes and subjects. A portion of the Rockefeller Grant for Folklore and Local History was set aside to aid in bringing a minimum of ten writers to Banff for one week, and to assist in defraying the expenses of A. M. Drummond, of Cornell University, as a Conference adviser.

The persons selected as delegates were Richard Needham, Calgary; Norman Soars, Peace River; Gwen Rharis Ringwood, Edmonton (alternate for Ross Annett, Consort); George Bugnet, Lake Majeu; Frank Steele, Lethbridge; Catherine Frost, Calgary;

William Parker, Wakateneau; John Gillese, Rochfort Bridge; Mrs. J. Yanda, Edmonton; Sheilagh Jameson, Midnapore (alternate for Della Foss, Edmonton); Elsie Park Gowan, Edmonton.

The first two days of the session were devoted to an examination of Alberta traditional materials and discussion of their possible use in literary form. The remainder of the week was given over to craft discussions in the fields of the short story, the play, the article, poetry, and the novel. The Conference also made a definite gesture toward the encouragement of younger writers by establishing the Creative Writing Competition for Alberta Schools. This contest which includes separate comeptitions in short story, poetry, and essay on Alberta background, has the blessing of the Provincial Department of Education. Prizes totaling $300 have been made available by the Provincial Chapter, I. O. D. E.

The Conference will hold its second session August 15-25, 1945, at the Banff School of Fine Arts. Particulars may be obtained by writing the Director, Department of Extension, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

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Gwen Pharis, the Alberta playwright who has done notable work in the field of the one-act play, is this year writing plays under the terms of the Folklore and Local History Project. Her contract calls for the completion

of three Alberta plays by September 30, 1945. Her plays will be made available, royalty free, to any producing group in Alberta. Her first play, The Jack and the Joker, is based on some of the experiences of Bob Edwards.

The Folklore and Local History Project is also offering prizes of $75, $50, and $25 for the three one-act plays submitted before May 1, 1945, which seem to best interpret the Alberta scene. The plays may deal with either contemporary or historical subjects.

Copies of The Jack and the Joker and the rules for the Playwriting Contest may be obtained by writing the Department of Extension, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

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There is certainly no dearth of things to write about in Alberta. Consider a few of the following subjects, none of which, so far as we know, have ever been used, other than in short articles, as the basis for a piece of serious regional writing: the oil and real estate booms, the Frank slide, Nigger John Ware, Kamoose Taylor and the old Macleod Hotel, Twelve Foot Davis, the Lemon Mine, Hatfield the Rainmaker, Midnight, the famous stampede horse, and the remittance men. And what about the Alberta rivers? The Peace, the North and South Saskatchewan, the Athabaska, each of these should be good for an important book. We shouldn't forget to mention some of the colorful special

settlements such as the Barr Colony at Lloydminster and the "Bull Outfit" at Beaverlodge. These are certainly worthy literary material, as are the stories of some of the early trails: the Edson Trail, for instance, has never been adequately written up. It would make quite a tale. The Folklore and Local History Project has the ultimate intention of making materials relating to such subjects available to Alberta writers.

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One of the best sources of material interpretative of the region exists in the files of Alberta newspapers. Recognizing this we have undertaken to make a "Writers' Index" of the first Alberta paper, the Edmonton Bulletin. The Index will cover the years between December 6, 1880 and the end of 1910. Special attention is being given to the listing of materials of ~~special~~ particular interest to historians and to writers interested in basing stories on western events. Material in other newspapers referring to certain events will also be noted. This Index will be ready later in the spring.